



National Weather Service  
San Joaquin Valley  
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Hanford, CA 93230-5236



## **Hazardous Weather Awareness Week**

The National Weather Service's San Joaquin Valley office, located in Hanford, is promoting January 26<sup>th</sup> through 31<sup>st</sup> as Hazardous Weather Awareness Week.

### **...TEMPERATURE EXTREMES AND WILDFIRES...**

Weather-wise the San Joaquin Valley is noted for its foggy cold seasons... episodes of blowing dust... and its long..hot..dry summers. But the San Joaquin Valley... neighboring mountain ranges... and Kern Desert areas of Interior Central California combine to exhibit tremendous temperature variations within as well as over the seasons. Due to area terrain differences alone... a day/s temperatures can vary from 110 degrees in the Kern Deserts to maximum temperatures of only 50 degrees and overnight minimums at freezing on mountains only a few tens of miles away.

Weather-wise individuals recognize that temperature normals are really temperature averages based on a few short years...climatologically. When an excessively hot or cold spell occurs... the local population may be caught unprepared for the deviation from so-called normals. Seasonal temperature extremes are common in the Southwest United States including Interior Central California. When extreme temperatures are forecast...the National Weather Service will underscore the threats from extreme heat and cold through a variety of Statements... Advisories... and even Warnings. Young children... the elderly... and the sick are most susceptible to medical conditions such as heat stroke and hypothermia resulting from temperature extremes. On average... 175 Americans die each year from the heat!

Some steps to be taken to avoid the threat from extremely hot weather...

- ...Avoid prolonged exposure or strenuous physical activity in high heat.
- ...Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.
- ...Wear lightweight...light-colored...loose-fitting clothing.
- ...Wear a hat to shield yourself from the sun and use sunscreen to reduce possible sunburn.
- ...Friends...relatives...or neighbors should check on people at risk from high heat.

To avoid the threats from extremely cold or winter weather conditions...

- ...Plan to wear several layers of clothes as this is warmer than a single heavy coat.
- ...Wear a hat as 20 percent of body heat is lost through the head.
- ...Make frequent checks on people at risk from extreme cold.

...Avoid travel if at all possible when severe winter weather conditions are forecast.

If travel is necessary...

...Drive with caution and be prepared for severe winter weather.

...Make sure the vehicle is in good running condition.

...Consider taking a winter storm kit along including such items as tire chains... booster cables... flashlight... shovel... blankets and extra clothing... water... a first aid kit... or anything else that would help you survive in case you become stranded.

Always monitor your favorite news source for updated weather information. Also NOAA Weather Radio is an excellent source of getting up-to-date information on temperature extreme hazards... and does provide guidelines to reduce the hazard to life.

Wildfires are nature's way of managing wild plant life and regenerating growth. However...they also can be the result of other factors. Persons burning materials... intentionally set fires... and lightning create hundreds of wildfires each year. Public awareness of wildfires has increased due to the recent devastating fires in Southern California along with other similar events such as the Oakland Hills Fire in the early 1990s. Due to the rapid population growth... housing construction has pushed into grass and timberland here in California. And where homes and subdivisions border on or blend with the wildlands here in Interior Central California.... they become vulnerable to fire at these urban/wildland interfaces.

With low humidities... available plant fuels... dry soils... and strong transport winds... wildfires can quickly spread and threaten homes and other structures. The National Weather Service issues routine and special /spot/ fire weather forecasts for Interior Central California for fire threat assessment and suppression planning. The routine fire weather forecasts are made available through the Internet for all residents. But through the use of discriminating communications systems... specialized and custom-tailored spot forecasts can be sent directly to a requesting fire suppression entity within Central California to enable a better response to a fire threat or a management burn.

Firewise is a program to educate the public about life and property protection from wildfires and can be found at the Internet Web address of [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org). For more information on Interior Central California temperature extremes... safety suggestions... and fire weather forecasts... contact the National Weather Service San Joaquin Valley Office. Contact information can be obtained through the Weather Service Internet Website at [www.wrh.noaa.gov/hanford](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/hanford).

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